

Regulatory Programs

The Corps of Engineers regulates construction and other work in navigable waterways under [Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899](#). The Corps of Engineers also has authority over the discharge of dredged or fill material into the "waters of the United States" -- a term which includes wetlands and all other aquatic areas -- under Section 404 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (PL 92-500, the "Clean Water Act"). Under these laws, those who seek to carry out such work must first receive a permit from the Corps.

The [Section 404 program](#) is the principal way by which the federal government protects wetlands and other aquatic environments. The program's goal is to ensure protection of the aquatic environment while allowing for sustainable economic development.

The individual permit evaluation process includes a public notice and a public comment period. Applications for complex projects may also require a public hearing before the Corps makes a permit decision. In its evaluation of applications, the Corps is required by law to consider all factors involving public interest. These may include economics, environmental concerns, historical values, fish and wildlife, aesthetics, flood damage prevention, land use classifications, navigation, recreation, water supply, water quality, energy needs, food production and the general welfare of the public.

The Corps of Engineers has issued a number of nationwide general permits, mostly for minor activities which have little or no environmental impact. Individual Corps districts have also issued regional general permits for certain types of minor work in specific areas. Individuals who propose work that falls under one of these general permits need not go through the individual permit process. General permits reduce delays and paperwork for applicants and allow the Corps to devote its resources to the most significant cases while maintaining the environmental safeguards of the

Clean Water Act.

Related Links

[Seattle District Regulatory Branch](#)

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